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Title: A Comparison of Pre-Radiotherapy Dental Treatment Needs between HPV Positive and HPV Negative Oropharyngeal SCCs

Body: Background
The incidence of oropharyngeal cancer is rising, accounting for a significant proportion of referrals to the Pre-Radiotherapy Assessment Clinic at Dublin Dental University Hospital. Differences in risk factors between HPV-positive and HPV-negative oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinomas (SCCs) may influence dental treatment needs before radiotherapy.

Methods
Data was collected from new patient assessments on the Pre-Radiotherapy Assessment Clinic in 2024, focusing on individuals diagnosed with oropharyngeal SCC. Medical, social, and dental histories, along with clinical findings and pre-radiotherapy dental treatment needs, were recorded and analysed.

Results
Approximately one-third of new referrals during this period were for oropharyngeal SCC, with the majority being HPV-positive. Patients with HPV-negative SCC exhibited poorer oral health, characterized by worse oral hygiene and higher periodontal disease scores. Higher treatment need was seen in HPV negative cases also, with more patients requiring active intervention and more extractions being required per patient.

Conclusions
HPV-negative oropharyngeal cancer is associated with significantly poorer oral health and increased dental treatment needs before radiotherapy. This highlights the impact of the differences in risk factors between these cancers on oral health.

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